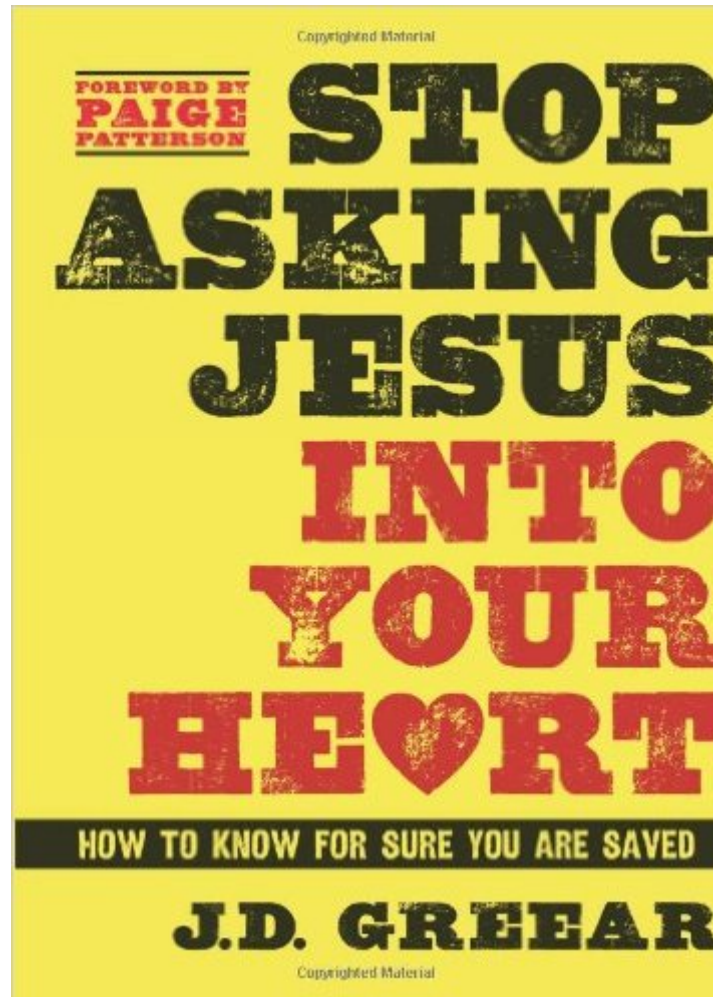


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Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart: How To Know For Sure You Are Saved



Synopsis

“If there were a Guinness Book of World Records entry for ‘amount of times having prayed the sinner’s prayer,’ I’m pretty sure I’d be a top contender,” says pastor and author J. D. Greear. He struggled for many years to gain an assurance of salvation and eventually learned he was not alone. “Lack of assurance” is epidemic among evangelical Christians. In *Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart*, J. D. shows that faulty ways of presenting the gospel are a leading source of the confusion. Our presentations may not be heretical, but they are sometimes misleading. The idea of “asking Jesus into your heart” or “giving your life to Jesus” often gives false assurance to those who are not saved and keeps those who genuinely are saved from fully embracing that reality. Greear unpacks the doctrine of assurance, showing that salvation is a posture we take to the promise of God in Christ, a posture that begins at a certain point and is maintained for the rest of our lives. He also answers the tough questions about assurance: What exactly is faith? What is repentance? Why are there so many warnings that seem to imply we can lose our salvation? Such issues are handled with respect to the theological rigors they require, but Greear never loses his pastoral sensitivity or a communication technique that makes this message teachable to a wide audience from teens to adults.

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Customer Reviews

If there were a Guinness Book of World Records record for “amount of times having asked Jesus into your heart,” J.D. Greear is pretty sure he would hold it. Like so many church kids he asked Jesus into his heart when he was very young, and then again when he was slightly older, and then

again every time he wondered if he really loved Jesus, and then again whenever he felt the guilt of sin. For years he wrestled with assurance and fought for an answer to this question: How can anyone know, beyond all doubt, that they are saved? It is a question most Christians ask at one time or another; it is a question every pastor faces on a regular basis. Greear's new book *Stop Asking Jesus Into Your Heart* tackles this question head-on and does so very effectively. Greear sets out to accomplish two things: to help the Christian find assurance that he has been saved, and to help the unbeliever resting on a false assurance see his danger and to turn to Christ. "My prayer is that by the time we're done, you'll know exactly where you stand with God. I hope to show you how to base your assurance on a promise God gave once for all in Christ and not on the fleeting memory of a prayer you once prayed." What Greear teaches is consistent with what the best theologians have been drawing from Scripture for so long, that "what saves the sinner is a posture of repentance and faith toward Christ, that and that alone. Any 'sinner's prayer' is only good insofar as it expresses that posture." "Salvation does indeed happen in a moment, and once you are saved you are always saved. The mark, however, of someone who is saved is that they maintain their confession of faith until the end of their lives.

I really enjoyed JD's last book *Gospel: Recovering the Power that Made Christianity Revolutionary* and was eager to read his next. *Stop Asking* is a great companion to his earlier work. From the beginning of this book, it's clear that JD has written it because of the agonizing uncertainty about his salvation he experienced at a younger age. He shares his story that time and time again, when he listened to a pastor invite him to ask Jesus into his heart, his nagging doubts about whether he was repentant enough the last time he accepted Christ would drive him to respond to the alter call again. This book is really written for two audiences. The first are Christians who need to stop worrying about whether their own conversion was "good enough". JD guides them to see that since their salvation is comes from Jesus' work, not their own, it will always be sufficient. As in his previous book, he also shows how the Gospel is not a milestone in their faith, but the cornerstone. You never get past it because it defines you as a believer. The second group are people who may behave like Christians from time to time (or have done so in the past) and are under the false impression that the sinner's prayer alone will get them to heaven -- even if their life since shows no signs of redemption. Here JD carefully examines the difference between the backsliding and failings all Christians experience and the signs that you have not, in fact, been saved. I liked that the book is short and to the point, and how JD is able to use some great stories to help clarify some difficult theological concepts.

J. D.'s personal testimony drew me immediately to *Stop Asking Jesus into Your Heart*. He recounts asking Jesus into his hearts thousands of times and getting baptized multiple times. If you've read my testimony you know I was baptized as an infant in the Roman Catholic Church, baptized again around four years old, baptized again in junior high, and then again at the end of high school. Throughout my childhood until college I struggled deeply with my own salvation. I was particularly susceptible to the manipulation present in many of the messages preached at summer camp by evangelists. Many of these were filled with guilt and condemnation instead of grace and hope. The gospel was sadly absent. I would sin, weep, and repent and then do well. I would then sin, weep, and repent and then do well. My life followed the pattern of Israel in Judges. I spent many nights up late at night searching in Romans seeking God asking him why I couldn't overcome my sin. It wasn't until God brought a handful of people into my life that loved the gospel and explained it in all its beauty and power that I discovered I was accepted by God and the same Spirit which changed my heart would empower me to live a life pleasing unto God (p. 18). J. D. went through a similar struggle and I believe with him that many Christians are experiencing this same cycle of sin, praying a prayer, baptism, *ad infinitum*. Throughout this book J. D.'s exposition and application is balanced and straightforward. He doesn't cover the gospel. He unleashes it. He mines down to the roots of the mountain to find the source of our confusion. For example, J. D. explains how belief and repentance are connected: The biblical summation of a saving response toward Christ is "repentance" and "belief" in the gospel (p. 7).

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